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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: US, US, US;BERLIN

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¶1. Lead Stories Summary

The main stories in the print media centered on chronologies of the years 2000-2009. Die Welt carried an eight-page special. Frankfurter

Allgemeine led with the headline: "America Prepares Strikes Against

Al-Qaida in Yemen," while Sueddeutsche focused on the establishment of

a data base that will register the data of all 40 million gainfully

employed people in Germany. Under the headline: "Pilots: Duty Free

Shops Are a Risk," Tagesspiegel dealt with the debate about new security measures at airports. Editorials focused on the economic

and general events in 2009 ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute opened with a report in which President Obama accused the U.S. intelligence services of having failed, while ARD-TV's early evening

newscast Tagesschau opened with a story on the debate over the introduction of a new generation of full-body scanners.

The media this morning (12/31) again carried extensive coverage of the aftermath of the failed terrorist attack in the United States. Some focused on the debate over the introduction of full body scanners to prevent future attacks; others focus on the impact of the failed attack on President Obama's reputation, while others are now

wondering
whether Yemen will be another front in the war on terror and whether
the President will now be able to close the Guant namo prison camp.

12. (U.S.) Impact of Failed Attack

Suedwest Presse of Ulm (12/31) criticized that "since the 9/11 attacks, the United States has constantly escalated entry requirements. Nothing goes without biometric passports, without registration in the Internet, without fingerprints, because an alleged tourist could in reality be a terrorist. Questions concerning his menu aboard, details of the booking of his ticket should filter him out of the list of the anonymous mass of harmless people. Now a terrorist was aboard. U.S. agencies knew him, and he was considered dangerous and even got a visa. This shows that the craze to collect data, a move that has been lauded as a panacea, does not lead to the hoped-for results if investigators are drowning in the information they have hoarded - or if they simply do a slovenly job."

In the view of Badische Zeitung of Freiburg (12/31), "Time will tell whether it will turn out to be a scandal if the CIA does not ring the

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alarm bell when a concerned father somewhere in western Africa reports of his wayward son. Nevertheless, Obama's fit of anger has its reasons. The Republicans cleverly took advantage of the blunders.

But it was Obama who remained silent for much too long about the attack, thus risking his credibility. He now wants to iron out his mistake but he must beware of not shouting too loud. This, too, was not very convincing either."

General-Anzeiger of Bonn (12/31) argued: "As far as politics is concerned, much is at risk for Barack Obama. He could now easily get the reputation of being out of touch with reality, similarly like his predecessor George W. Bush with his harmless remarks following hurricane Katrina. Unreliability is unforgivable, including for a president."

Regional daily MQRkische Allgemeine of Potsdam (12/31) had this to say: "It would be devastating for Barack Obama if the impression grew that he would be too lax at the anti-terror front. That is another reason why his tirade against the sloppiness of his security agencies was so fierce. But even if he had used a softer tone, he cannot be accused of having made great mistakes. He reacted faster than his predecessor George W. Bush following the comparable terrorist attack of the 'shoe bomber' in 2001; Obama did not minimize the danger, called the mistake openly by name and announced the consequences. Bush primarily played down the affair."

13. (U.S.) Yemen, Guant namo

In a report under the headline: "Guant namo Closure on a Knife's Edge," Frankfurter Rundschau (12/31) wrote: "U.S. President Obama gave himself one year to eliminate the legacy from the Bush presidency's

anti-terror war, but it is becoming increasingly questionable whether he will be able to keep to his promise. This one-year deadline was already over before the most recent incident and now the closure could be totally in question. The latest revelations that two of the masterminds of the attack are former Guant namo prisoners are now putting massive pressure on the President. The attack is supposed to have been planned in Yemen and the problem is that 90 of the 198 Guant namo prisoners are also Yemenites, and, according to Obama's most recent security concept, many of them should be allowed to return home. Over the past few months, the Obama government had put aside security concerns to make at least progress concerning the closure of Guant namo."

Die Welt (12/31) editorialized on its front-page under the headline: "Obama and Yemen," that it is "uncontroversial that systems that are supposed to protect airports are undermined by terrorists. As
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unwise as President Obama's silence concerning the attack in Detroit was, just as important is his admonition not to become hysterical.... Obama will demonstrate his weakness or strength in his future treatment of Yemen, Somalia and other terror hot spots. It should be obvious that conventional wars will not defeat, but recruit, fanatic religious warriors. This should be obvious after Iraq and Afghanistan. Obama is now likely to order missile and drone attacks more frequently in Yemen, too. It would only be appropriate if his tone towards Iran and every other state that finances terrorist activities were sharper and sanctions more likely. Obama is neither a pacifist nor a softie. He will do what will best protect America. But while George W. Bush failed to win the war on terror by using 'bring-them-on' gestures, Barack Obama will succeed in using drones and diplomacy either. As long as the Islamic world is not outraged, as long as imams, politicians and mothers do not confront the lust for murder, the longing for defeat, and the craze of young men wanting to feel that they are the Chosen ones, there will be no end."

Frankfurter Allgemeine (12/31) opined: "Now it is becoming clear that not only the father of the Nigerian attacker informed the CIA but that U.S. agencies also had some information on a planned attack of a Nigerian terrorist. If all this information had been correctly connected, the young man would never have been able to board the plane. Obama is right when he demands a radical investigation. For what sense does it make to collect millions of pieces of data if they do not reach the agency they are supposed to reach? The President will now also have to face new questions concerning the closure of Guant namo. If it is right that the masterminds of this attack are former Guant namo prisoners...then one should not be surprised at the resistance to Obama's plans to close the prison camp."

Mnchener Merkur (12/31) judged: "This late criticism of his

intelligence services does not change the fact that Barack Obama, who has otherwise demonstrated such a sure instinct, is not cutting a good figure against the background of this failed terror attack.... The second problem has a foreign policy nature. The U.S. government must take note of the fact that, with Yemen, another dangerous bridgehead of the al-Qaida network has developed, which is threatening the United States on its own territory and which should remind Obama in an uncomfortable way of the origin of the Afghanistan conflict."

14. (Anti-Terrorism) Assessment of Passenger Screening

In the opinion of Die Welt (12/31), "those who want to keep their freedom of movement as global citizens, should not be too whiny in times of terrorism as citizens who have privacy, human dignity, and

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a sense of shame. Freedom above the clouds has its price. It may be that this reasoning will gain the upper hand, in the end, but the least a civil society must keep in mind regarding the dilemma between freedom and security is the awareness of the price it will pay if, as it looks right now, it gives in to the brutal powers of persuasion when it comes to thinking in security terms. The citizen who boards a plane must accept that he is considered a security risk. As a state of emergency this can be tolerated, but as a permanent routine it will destroy a civil society."

Regional daily MQRkische Oderzeitung of Frankfurt on the Oder (12/31) opined: "No one knows whether the scanning of the Nigerian attacker would have prevented the attempted terrorist attack right from the start. With their maliciousness, terrorists are always in the lead. Nevertheless, this can be no argument against full-body scanners. Despite efforts to protect the privacy of passengers, the lives of many others are at stake, and this must, in case of doubt, have priority. Next to Islamic attackers, laws or humanity do not mean anything."

Regional daily Coburger Tageblatt (12/31) had this to say: "A gulf of failures seems to be behind the thwarted attack on a Delta Airlines aircraft. What should we think of the fact that intelligence services had information, but that this information seeped away in the jungle of rivaling authorities? The United States has indefinitely inflated its security apparatus with 16 different intelligence services and they have rather become the symbol of a bureaucracy based on a collective security neurosis. But thus far, this bureaucracy has not proven that it is able to protect the country. And the passengers are wondering why they should tolerate all the harassment including to be scanned to their skin."

15. Look Back at 2009, Look Ahead to 2010

All papers (12/31) carried extensive coverage of the past year and the

past decade and only a few looked ahead to 2010. Several papers carried eight-page supplements on the past ten years. Sueddeutsche

Zeitung carried an editorial headlined: "The Failure of Politics," and judged: "The big industrialized nations and the threshold countries are treating their future in a stupid way. There are a lot of negotiations, but there is no action. Seventy percent of Germans said in a recent opinion poll that they lost confidence in politics and the economy. The politicians' lust for power, empty promises, and the sticking to traditional policies have resulted in the fact that Germans are skeptical about 2010. This pessimism finds its

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expression all over the world. If [politicians] do not succeed in massively reducing the increase in greenhouse gases in the next decade, the UN Climate Council is predicting an irreversible disintegration of the global economic system and an end of civilization which we currently consider comfortable."

Regional daily Westdeutsche Zeitung of Dsseldorf (12/31) observed:

"The vacuum that the U.S. loss of power has created may not be filled quickly enough. And the greatest problem is China's immaturity. Without this new economic power, nothing goes in the world. But the vast empire is neither willing nor able to do justice to its new international responsibilities. These are not very good prospects for the next decade."

Regional daily Der Neue Tag of Weiden (12/31) opined: "Quite often we heard this year of a new start--a new start in the United States with Barack Obama at the helm, a new start in Berlin, or a new start in relatioQ between the West and Islam. But on closer inspection, these many new starts were false starts, missed or blotched opportunities.... The developments on the globe are getting too much for us, since everything is taking place here and now. That is one reason alone why we would like to push the reset button, but it does not offer a guarantee for success. It only symbolizes the belief in the principle of hope."

DELAWIE